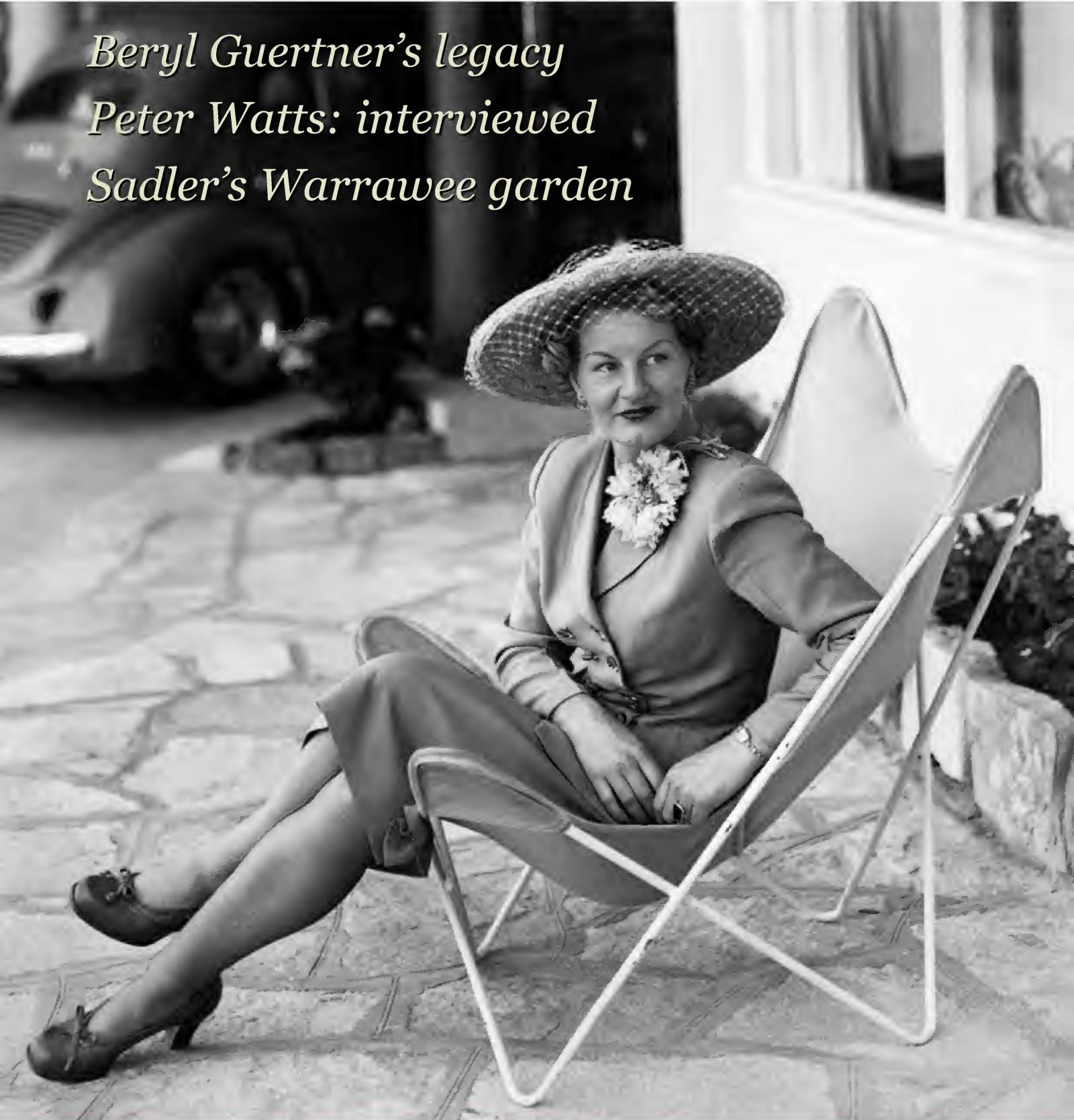


# Australian Garden

HISTORY

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October/November/December 2008

*Beryl Guertner's legacy*  
*Peter Watts: interviewed*  
*Sadler's Warrawee garden*



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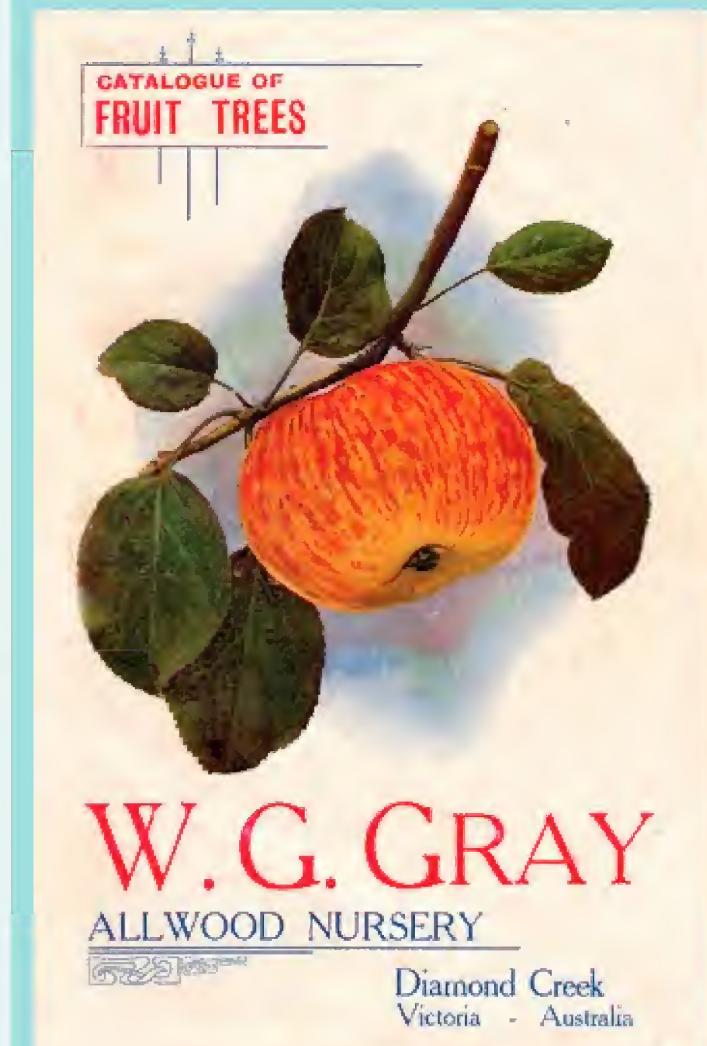
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Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales director Peter Watts and curator Colleen Morris at the opening of the Lost Gardens of Sydney exhibition—see editorial opposite and story on page 14



1906 nursery catalogue from the historic Allwood Nursery, recently visited by Victorian Branch members—see Bruce Draper's article on page 34

**Cover:** Beryl Guertner, founding editor of *Australian House & Garden*, seated in a trend-setting butterfly chair, c.1950, and captioned on the original 'early House & Garden days'. Image courtesy Howard Tanner

# From the editors

*Christina Dyson and Richard Aitken*

August the 19th this year was a red-letter day for the Society. It marked the official opening of the Lost Gardens of Sydney exhibition at the Museum of Sydney and the launch of the accompanying book of the same name. The exhibition has been proudly sponsored by the Australian Garden History Society, bringing the Society's mission under public notice in an unparalleled manner. We must also feel particularly proud of the leading role played by our national chair, Colleen Morris, as curator of the exhibition and author of the accompanying book. The Lost Gardens of Sydney project has been a long-held dream for Colleen, as a means of showcasing the rich archival holdings relating to Australia's garden heritage and giving expression to her own deeply felt interest in this subject, while simultaneously placing the Australian Garden History Society and its core role centre stage.

While introducing Peter Valder, who officially opened the Lost Gardens of Sydney exhibition, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales director Peter Watts disarmingly noted that this was the '450th or 500th' HHT exhibition opening over which he had presided—and his last. After a marathon stint of 27 years, Peter is stepping down from his directorial role in September this year. As a founder and key longtime supporter of the Australian Garden History Society, it seemed entirely appropriate that an exhibition theme so close to his heart and professional interests should have closed his remarkable tenure. Elsewhere in this issue, we publish edited transcripts from several exit interviews Peter has given, but it remains to offer our own appreciation of Peter's career with the Historic Houses Trust.

When Peter Watts was appointed as inaugural director of the Historic Houses Trust, he brought experience gained at the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), in particular his pioneering engagement with Victoria's garden heritage. Once in New South Wales, the newly formed organisation which he now headed had a skeleton staff and management of just two historic properties—Elizabeth Bay House and Vaucluse House. Under Peter's direction, the Historic Houses Trust has metamorphosed into arguably the country's leading museum organisation, with a portfolio of some twenty properties, an outstanding research library, and an Endangered Houses Fund. At the core of the Trust's philosophy has been a rigorous approach to scholarship and interpretation. In this, Peter has demonstrated prescient and often challenging guidance. After a professional lifetime in the job, it is difficult to see this brilliant and restless mind remaining quiescent.

## Contents

<i>Celebrating Australian House and Garden and its founding editor Beryl Guertner</i>	
HOWARD TANNER	4
<i>Peter Watts: the exit interviews</i>	7
<i>'Cha-No-Yu' in Warrawee: Professor Sadler and his Japanese tea house</i>	9
SILAS CLIFFORD-SMITH	10
<i>Professor Sadler's garden at Rivenhall, Warrawee</i>	11
COLLEEN MORRIS	14
<i>Mystery and malevolence: the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens celebrates 190 years</i>	15
GWENDA SHERIDAN	19
<i>Jan Seto (1950–2008): an appreciation</i>	21
<i>National Management Committee profile: Lynne Walker</i>	26
<i>For the bookshelf</i>	27
<i>Recently released</i>	29
<i>Jottanda</i>	30
<i>Dialogue</i>	31
<i>Diary dates</i>	32
<i>Orcharding at historic Allwood</i>	33
BRUCE DRAPER	34

# Celebrating Australian House and Garden and its founding editor Beryl Guertner

Howard Tanner

*Australian House and Garden* celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, a longevity enjoyed by very few Australian magazines. This article profiles the early decades of the journal and its founding editor, Beryl Guertner.

In this age of relative equality and liberal views it is difficult to imagine life before the 1960s, when the 'rule of regular arrangements' prevailed. While much of it was linked to appearances and a contrived view of proper British conduct, it sought to curtail the activities of independent-minded women. Female doctors in the hospital system and women academics were effectively required to remain single and celibate if they were to hold on to their jobs and possibly be considered for promotion. The role of women in World War II had improved their confidence and standing, however their pay packets ensured that they generally could not live independently of family or husband, or of subsidised accommodation. A brief career as a secretary or a nurse was the acceptable precursor to marriage and children.

Popular journalism had long provided a vehicle for the voice of independent women. At best it allowed expression for (Dame) Mary Gilmore and Miles Franklin; more typically it considered family and homemaking matters. During the 1920s *The Home* (1920–42) and *Australian Home Beautiful* (1925–) had conveyed comfortable middle-class perspectives of domestic life; after World War II, *Australian Women's Weekly* (1932–) and *Australian House and Garden* (1948–) infiltrated the typical household, and facilitated new attitudes to everyday family life in Australia.

*'Beryl and I shared a small room, always full of cigarette smoke and laughter'*

During the late 1940s, after years of economic recession, wartime shortages, and frugal living, there was a surging demand for new homes, household equipment, and fresh interior

decoration. Ken Murray, an enterprising young magazine publisher, sensed the opportunity and found a suitable editor (not editress, she insisted) in Beryl Guertner to tap the market. With only sixteen weeks and limited resources, Guertner—buoyed by her natural drive and sharp eye—produced the first issue of *Australian House and Garden* in December 1948. Her friend and colleague Frances Hutchison recalled:

*Murrays was a small family firm in those days. Beryl and I shared a small room, always full of cigarette smoke and laughter and sometimes furious arguments, next to Freddy Folkard editing Man magazine—we were always given a free copy—with Ayleen Lewis editing Homemaker Magazine just down the corridor. The whole staff retired to the Metropole hotel next door for lunch, a kind of office home from home.*

Almost alone in its field, *Australian House and Garden* opened the possibilities of living with style on modest means, and of pushing aside staid 'cream and mushroom pink' residential conformity. It was an era of self-help, and the magazine provided ingenious small-home plans by architect W. Watson Sharp, conveyed the excitement of good design, and promoted innovative paint colours and decorative schemes. From the start Guertner introduced the public to important designers such as Robin Boyd, Syd Archer, Harry Seidler, Grant Featherstone, and Marion Hall Best. The best photography was by Max Dupain. Gardening advice was influenced by Guertner's friend Margaret Davis, founder of the Garden Club of New South Wales (later the Garden Club of Australia).

As an editor for the K.G. Murray Publishing Co. Pty Ltd (which came to include Gregory's guides and maps), Guertner was responsible for *Australian House and Garden* until 1973 and *Good Gardening* during 1970–77. She wrote

many books including *The Australian Book of Flower Arrangement* (1964) and the *Australian Book of Furnishing and Decorating* (1967); her *Gregory's Guide to Better Gardens* (c.1964) ran to six editions; and she produced over thirty homemaker and gardening guides.

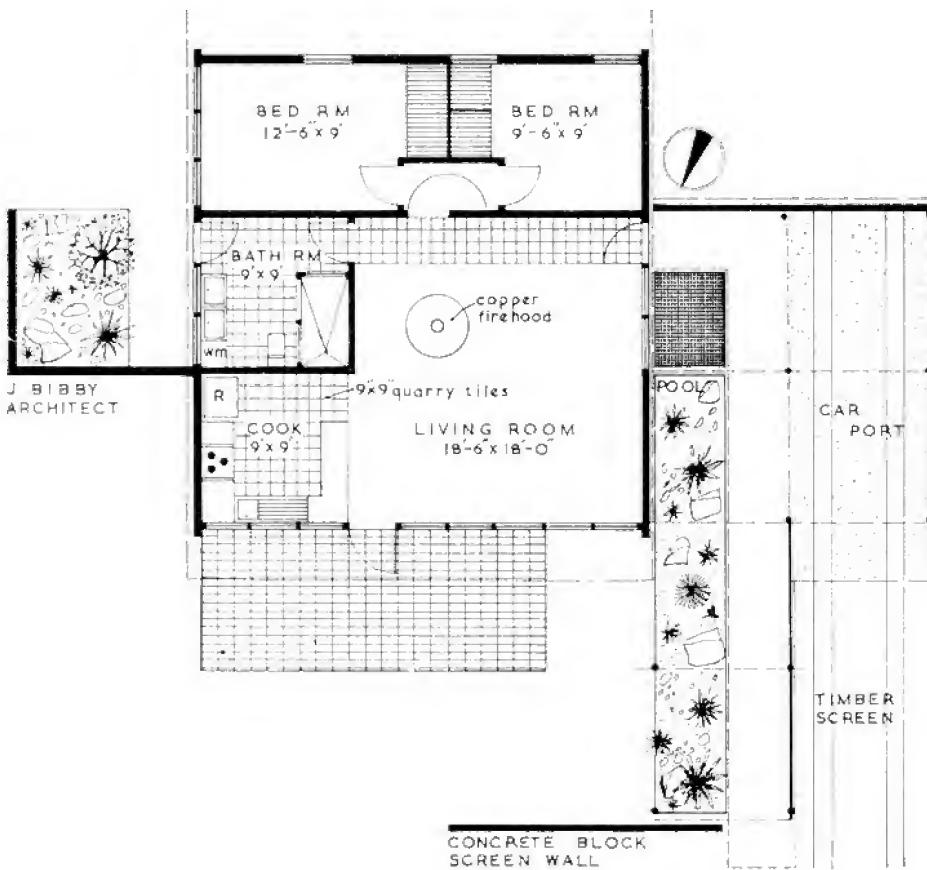
*Australian House and Garden* was initially influenced by *American House and Garden* and then, in the 1960s, by California's *Sunset* magazine—especially its advocacy of warm-climate gardening and outdoor living. The early garden illustrations displayed a formal character, showing large gardens established in the 1920s and 1930s, but gradually encompassed more typical suburban images, with timber decks, patios, pergolas, swimming pools, and courtyards providing a focus. From 1955, an *Annual* summarised major trends. Guertner's photographic policy saw every major house shoot contribute to a library of garden images, and this was supplemented by photographer Ed Ramsay. The magazine regularly profiled different plant species and categories (bulbs, annuals, and perennials) and provided a monthly horticultural diary and garden construction articles by Tom Moore and others. An early contributor was Edna Walling, who illustrated her garden designs at Braemark (Mooroolbark, Vic.) and Lynton Lee (Bickleigh Vale), and wrote on 'Good mulching with hay'. Long-time gardening correspondents

included Reg Edwards and Rolfe Bradley. Gardening content was revamped in the 1980s with the introduction of Jennifer Stackhouse's column 'On Home Ground', Tim North's enquiry service, and Michele Shennen's 'Garden Diary'—their articles enhanced by superior photography and colour printing.

Beryl Guertner

Beryl Guertner (1917–1981), the founding editor of *Australian House and Garden*, was a leader in an influential generation of independent women who, without private means, led stylish and successful lives outside the conventional framework. Born in Sydney, she grew up in Wagga Wagga, where she trained as a secretary.

Guertner was drawn to the written and spoken word. The natural actress in her saw the writing of elegant and informed prose, and the ability to hold an audience as skills that might lead her into a more creative world. Metropolitan life beckoned; she went to Sydney aged 21, and lived in the Mosman Bay area until 1949. She worked in the publicity department of Paramount Pictures (where her colleague,



From the mid-1960s Beryl Guertner edited the 'Homemaker Series' for publisher Gregory's Guides and Maps Ltd. This plan by architect James Bibby (for Mr and Mrs Norman Chettle of Mona Vale, Sydney), captured contemporary enthusiasm for integrated internal and external courtyards and appeared in the first Homemaker volume entitled *Gregory's 200 Home Plans*.

the artist George Lawrence, created a memorable bookplate for her celebrating literature and womanhood) and as a journalist on the *Daily Telegraph*. An active member of the Society of Women Writers of New South Wales, she was its president in 1960.

At Warrimoo in the Blue Mountains, Guertner and Catherine (Kate) Warmoll created from 1949 a sophisticated country retreat for themselves. The imaginative garden was filled with unusual plants, with fieldstone walls easing the transition towards the natural landscape of sandstone shelves, angophoras, and waratahs.

The cottage interiors were accented by a massive sandstone chimney, striking *objets*, and richly coloured walls and patterned fabrics and wallpapers, including a paisley paper, combining mauve and turquoise to remarkable effect.

Moving to Macmasters Beach, they retired from full-time careers in 1973, and made a subtropical garden beside Lake Cockrone.

Recalled as a strong and engaging personality—of great warmth, generosity and quick wit—Beryl Guertner was a persuasive advocate for the new ideas and designs that helped transform domestic life in post-war Australia.

These cover images from early issues of *Australian House and Garden* (1948–50) capture the flavour of the magazine under Beryl Guertner's editorship.



The *Australian House and Garden*'s 'Practical Planning Series', edited by Beryl Guertner, extended the magazine's influence from the mid-1950s through these thematic magazine-style publications.

**Howard Tanner** is a past chair of the Australian Garden History Society. He was inspired to become an architect by Beryl Guertner, a close family friend.

# Peter Watts: the exit interviews

Prior to his recent retirement after 27 years as director of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales (HHT), Peter Watts gave several interviews which form the basis of this article with questioners including writer and broadcaster David Marr.

***First of all, let's discuss your position at the Historic Houses Trust. You started out as an architect and landscape architect, but you've run the organisation for 27 years—that's a long time.***

It seems like a lifetime! I moved to Sydney from Melbourne in 1981 to start the Historic Houses Trust. I was very fortunate. I think I had five minutes more experience than anyone else in Australia. So I got the position and have had the luxury of being able to learn on the job.

I started in the last month of the first financial year of the HHT. I knew little about accounts. So I spent the first months with several huge volumes, which we had in those pre-computer days, reconstructing the accounts of the Trust's first 11 months. And I added up all the figures, got to a bottom line, worked out how much we'd been given, how much we'd spent, how much

we'd lost—that was my first task. It was very instructive. I have kept a close eye on the finances ever since. More pleasurable in those first few months was to contemplate the conservation of the Vaucluse House garden – a project that has been a particular passion and is still continuing.

When I arrived, the Trust was a small organisation, and brand new, having just been established by Premier Neville Wran. It had only two properties—Elizabeth Bay House and Vaucluse House. There had been an expectation in the years leading up to the bicentennial (1988) that a number of houses in government ownership would come to the Trust. These included Rouse Hill House and Elizabeth Farm. I don't think anyone had any idea just how much the organisation would grow beyond those four or five properties.



Photograph © Patrick Bingham-Hall



Photograph © Patrick Bingham-Hall

'Edge of the Trees' [1985] by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley forms a powerful statement about reconciliation at the entry to the Museum of Sydney *on site of first Government House*

### *So what's the portfolio like today?*

The HHT owns or manages about twenty properties altogether, and a very complex range of properties they are. They include houses, gardens, a farm, a beach, major public buildings and urban spaces and huge collections. Perhaps the unexpected ones are the Museum of Sydney, a very modern museum that we created on the site of the first Government House; Government House - since the Governor hasn't lived there since 1996; the Justice and Police Museum; Hyde Park Barracks; The Mint, in Macquarie Street; the Rose Seidler House from 1949; and a string of other houses.

### *These aren't houses ... these are landmarks!*

Yes, the expectation when the HHT was established was that we would only be involved with houses. But the government liked what we were doing and decided that we ought to use our skills elsewhere and so catapulted us into public museums—but always within very significant historic buildings, or sites. When that happened, about the end of our first ten years, the organisation was quite dramatically transformed. It was a perspicacious move. Wanting to stay in comfortable territory has never been my forte!

### *Why has the Historic Houses Trust been so energetic and successful?*

I give the fundamental credit to Neville Wran. You'd think: 'where would a Government place such an organisation called the Historic Houses Trust?' They'd stick it in heritage. He didn't. Wran placed us, as an organisation with a brief to look after some of the most important buildings and gardens in the state, in the Arts. Brilliant! It was the best thing that ever happened. He put an organisation that has a fundamental brief to deal with heritage in the Arts. We benchmark with the Arts. My colleagues are the directors of the Art Gallery, the State Library, the Australian Museum, the Sydney Opera House, the Powerhouse Museum. It puts us in a very different spot in the minds of the politicians. It puts us in the creative area. It's sexy—whereas heritage is perceived as being a bit boring, in the public and political mind. It keeps us on our toes and always looking forward and never back. It causes us to engage with today's world and to remain relevant. We have always kept our finger on the pulse of community opinion.

There were other reasons too. From the start we were well funded and the importance of that cannot be underestimated. I respect and understand the problems that the National Trust, and others, have. Our government funding



In his office at The Mint. (The picture in the background is by Aboriginal artist Evelyn Pultara.)

has been a huge advantage for us. Fortunately the money has come with little interference or direction from government.

Then there are the Trustees, who have been absolutely critical in all this. They always went along for the ride, always wanted the Trust to be out there, fresh, new, doing different things—not to be backward looking, but always to be forward looking. Whenever I put up a proposal to them, 'let's try something different', 'let's be bold and have a go at something else'—like the radical things we did at The Mint or the Museum of Sydney—they would say, 'Yes we're behind it. Let's grab it. And go for it.' They always gave me confidence, support and courage.

*Let's talk about the philosophy behind the Historic Houses Trust. As you've accumulated these different buildings and sites, all quite unique in their own individual ways, operating independently with no unifying idea between them, but guided by the Historic Houses Trust—is the idea to preserve and to keep them still?*

I think there's a fundamental underlying principle in everything that we do, and that comes out of respect for and knowledge of

each place. Before we touch a place, we study its history very carefully—we understand its social history, its physical history, and then we interrogate the building. We crawl all over it, scratch, poke and prod it, until it reveals its secrets. And then, having understood a place, we then try to define what is really important about it. And we make a statement. We usually make it a very short statement; about what it is that's important about a place. And everything we do—absolutely everything—either the physical conservation, or the programming that we run, arises out of that understanding of what's important about a place. It gives us very solid foundations, and that has been critical when the political winds blow hot and cold.

To give you a good example, when we took over the first Government House site, which was then just an archaeological site, we were given a lengthy document listing what people had said was significant about that place. A hundred different, and very obvious, reasons were given. But that just confuses.

We examined the document and came to a very different conclusion. The house itself had been demolished in 1846. We decided what was really important about that site was its symbolic value. There wasn't much left, but its symbolic value was immense. It meant very different things to different people. Its significance to the British history in Australia was obvious. But remember that we were engaging in this discussion in the eighties and nineties when reconciliation was an extremely important issue in the community and here we were dealing with perhaps the most critical site of 'first contact'. As soon as you said 'this place is important as a symbol of a turning point of a nation' it all of a sudden meant we had to deal with reconciliation and black/white issues. The museum, which opened in 1995, dealt with—and still deals with—these issues very effectively. So that's an outcome of studying, understanding and defining the significance of a place. Everything grows out of that.

*I hadn't thought about going into the politics of reconciliation. But, of course, this is a site that has all of those, all of those meanings.*

Museums inevitably have to deal with political issues. Recognising early on that we had to deal with black-white issues at the Museum of Sydney had huge ramifications. It was a huge leap for us as an organisation. I don't think we would have coped with it very well, but for one very serendipitous thing. I belong to a very grand-sounding organisation called the Council of Australian Museum Directors (CAMD) comprising

the directors of the major state and national museums. As we were debating (within the HHT) how to deal with the museum, CAMD happened to have its annual meeting in Darwin. It had been arranged that we would go to Maningrida, a remote Aboriginal community in Arnhem Land. We met the Elders. In my entire life I had had almost no contact with Aboriginal people, and here I was confronted with these remarkable, extraordinary men who spoke to us for a long time in their own language while we all just sat on the floor looking dumb-founded. There were about 15 of us. And then they laughed their heads off and said: 'You silly bloody white fellas, why didn't you tell us you didn't understand. You know this is one of our fifteen languages.' They went on to talk about their sadness at the steady loss of their culture. We all have profound experiences in our lives I suppose. And that was my most profound experience. I came back to Sydney with a renewed determination to deal with this issue head on. I recognised that as an organisation we had had, up to that date, a very Anglo centric view of Australian history. That changed forever. I think we dealt with collaboration extraordinarily well. The huge sculpture at the front of the museum, Edge of the Trees, by a black and a white artist, results in part from that sort of very serendipitous experience.

*I wonder about the future for the Historic Houses Trust. As you look at your achievements and then set the organisation on its wheel for the future, where should it go? Does its need to add more houses? Do you actually return some houses to private hands?*

My broad view is that as a community—and particularly in Sydney—we have enough museums, so we don't really need any more for the time being. I don't see there's a whole lot of growth in the museum area. For that reason we've started a new programme called the Endangered Houses Fund. Through this scheme we are going out on the open market acquiring important historic houses that are threatened in some way or another, resolving their problems and passing them back into the community through lease or sale. We have just finished the first one. We spent a couple of million dollars on a wonderful Macquarie-era house called Glenfield, near Liverpool. It's a way in which we can use all of the expertise that we've developed over the years and we have developed very deep expertise and knowledge within the organisation. We can use that to benefit the community generally, by applying that expertise to a whole range of other houses that just get rotated through a revolving fund. I find that tremendously exciting.

# *'Cha-No-Yu' in Warrawee: Professor Sadler and his Japanese tea house*

*Silas Clifford-Smith*

With a growing interest in the life and career of orientalist Professor Arthur Sadler we look at his fascinating career and how his former house and garden in the northern Sydney suburb of Warrawee reflected his interests.

In the northern Sydney suburb of Warrawee stands an impressive English style house named Rivenhall. The residence was built in 1923 for Professor Arthur Lindsay Sadler, the second Professor of Oriental Studies at the University of Sydney (1922–47), and his Japanese-born wife Eva. This attractive home was based on the design of a house—much loved by Sadler—in the English county of Essex. While the front of the house was Jacobean in design, the back of the building was more characteristic of the Mediterranean style which was in vogue in Australia at the time. Both reflecting his English heritage and his academic interests, the house was decorated with English furniture and Japanese artworks such as antique armour, swords, woodblock prints, and ceramics. In the garden,

stands of bamboo, iris-filled water pools, and a Japanese style tea house also reflected Sadler's fascination with Japanese history and culture.

Born in 1882 in London and educated there, Sadler later studied at Oxford University. His early academic specialisation was Hebrew, but during the early years of the twentieth century he decided to concentrate on Japanese language and culture. Sadler went to Japan and soon became fluent in the language. From 1909 to 1919, he taught Latin and English at the Higher College in Okayama, and from 1919 to 1922, he taught at the prestigious Peers' College in Tokyo. In gratitude for his services to teaching, Sadler was awarded the Imperial Order of the Rising Sun.



Photo: Silas Clifford-Smith

An early winter view of a section of the Rivenhall back garden

In 1922 Sadler was appointed to the professorial chair of the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of Sydney. His university lectures covered language as well as Japanese literature, history, art, architecture, and culture. During his time at the University of Sydney he published several important books on the orient as well as a number of highly regarded translations of Japanese classic literature.

Sadler was well acquainted with members of the Sydney art world. His circle of friends included the influential president of the Society of Artists and publisher, Sydney Ure Smith. With his knowledge of Japanese culture Sadler contributed several articles on Japanese art and customs to Ure Smith's influential publications, including *Art in Australia* and *The Home*.

Sadler was an academic with a diverse range of interests and opinions on garden design in Australia of relevance to garden historians. His views were best expressed in a long article in the January 1934 issue of *The Home*, titled 'Grumbling about gardens'. While generally praising Japanese gardens, Sadler complained at length on the uninspired design of Australian interwar gardens:

*But the surroundings of an Australian home are nothing but horticulture, and far from any inclination to suggest an atmosphere of seclusion or reticence, the dominating principle seems to be a desire that nothing shall be concealed from the passer-by. If there is a fountain or something of the sort, usually called 'a feature', I believe, it is sure to be struck right out by the road, while all the trees, if any existed, are cut down to make room for the charms of the bare lawn, with its symmetrical flower-beds and painfully dull neatness.<sup>1</sup>*

Of all Sadler's many writings, he is best remembered today for his comprehensive monograph *Cha-No-Yu: the Japanese tea ceremony*, the first major Western study of this important ritual. Sadler first wrote about *Cha-No-Yu* in a 1929 article published in the academic journal *Pacific Affairs* and it must have been about this time that he built his Japanese tea hut in the side garden of his Warrawee home (as it was



Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

Arthur Sadler pictured in *Hermes* (August 1922), the magazine of the University of Sydney, on his appointment as Professor of Oriental Studies

Professor Sadler was the author of many publications on Japanese culture, including this book on flower arranging published in 1933, dedicated 'To the artist potter Bernard Leach'. Leach had arrived in Japan in 1909, thus living there during the same period as Sadler and who, with Shoji Hamada, established Leach Pottery, at St Ives, Cornwall, in 1920. [Colleen Morris collection]



not mentioned in a 1926 newspaper feature on the property). Around the *Sukiya* (outdoor tea-hut) he created a *Roji* (tea-house garden) which included rustic rock paths and stands of bamboo. Sadler's garden was photographed by Harold Cazneaux and two images of the *Roji* were later used to accompany Sadler's 1932 article on the tea ceremony, published in *The Home*. Cazneaux's photographs show a non-decorous structure in keeping with the *Wabi* (austere simplicity) style commonly found in most Japanese tea houses. Sadler's tea house was in marked contrast to the

more ornate oriental pastiche built by Sadler's University friend and colleague, Professor E.G. Waterhouse, at Eryldene in the nearby suburb of Gordon. Interestingly, Sadler wrote a book on Japanese flower arranging in 1933 and Eva Sadler taught Professor Waterhouse's wife, Janet, the skills required to create these distinctive displays.

Sadler seems to have used the construction of his Warrawee *Sukiya* and *Roji* as an intellectual exercise while he wrote *Cha-No-Yu: the Japanese tea ceremony*. The Warrawee tea house was not only used by the Sadlers and their friends, but also by students of the University. Former Sadler student Marsden Hordern (the current owner of Rivenhall) well remembers visiting Sadler's Warrawee home in 1940 where he, along with other students, was instructed in the 'way of tea'. In the introduction to his book on *Cha-No-Yu*, Sadler commented on the reasons for having a tea house in a garden:

*It may seem a little affected for the noble to mimic the ways of the fisherman or hermit, but it is only viewing existence from a different angle, just as the house is arranged to look on various aspects of the garden from different rooms. Things being as they are, few can spend their life sitting under a tree thinking themselves into the universe like Buddha, but they can keep as near the trees as possible and reflect that they are themselves only just such another phase of nature. So to have a detached cell at the end of the garden where you can play the hermit for a while when you feel inclined, as Japanese do when they indulge in Cha-no-yu, is a very refreshing change, and unlike a private oratory is not associated with any particular sect or dogma.<sup>2</sup>*

According to Sadler, to direct the mind, plants located in a *Roji* should be thickly planted and should be quite ordinary. Non-flowering and non-fragrant plants were preferred as they did not distract the visitor from their thoughts. Therefore showy plants such as camellias, roses, or rhododendrons (plants generally associated with oriental gardens) should not be planted within view of the tea house. According to Sadler, ideal plants for the *Roji* were bamboo, conifers, deciduous trees, and shrubs such as *Elaeagnus pungens*.

As well as teaching at the University of Sydney, Sadler served as Professor of Japanese at the Royal Military College of Australia during the 1930s and 1940s. Sadler played an important role advising the Australian Government on Japanese cultural practices during the Pacific War: in one instance he advised the



Historic Houses Trust of NSW

Sadler's tea house at Rivenhall, photographed by Cazneaux (c.1930) and published in *The Home* (April 1932)

Government to bury the bodies of the dead Japanese submariners involved in the 1942 attack on Sydney Harbour in accordance with Japanese customs, and to send hair and nail clippings to their families through the Red Cross. According to the author of Sadler's obituary this humanitarian act led to an improvement in the Japanese attitude to Australian prisoners of war.<sup>3</sup>

*Sadler seems to have used the construction of his Warrawee Sukiya and Roji as an intellectual exercise while he wrote Cha-No-Yu: the Japanese tea ceremony*

Professor Sadler retired from his Australian academic posts at the end of the 1947 and late the following year he and his wife moved to England and settled in the (wonderfully named) Essex village of Helions Bumpstead. Perhaps feeling they were too cut off, the couple later moved to the larger well known Essex art community of Great Bardfield, where Sadler socialised with local artists (including the writer's parents) and visitors who shared knowledge of Japanese culture, such as the

studio potter Bernard Leach. Sadler maintained his academic interest well into old age and, according to Marsden Hordern, advised the British Museum on their Japanese collections.

Aged in his late eighties, Professor Sadler died of cancer in Essex in 1970. Sadler was later honoured by one of his former students, Matthew J. Morrissey—after Morrissey's death in 1984 his will established a fund to purchase 'far eastern (particularly Japanese) pictorial works of art' in memory of Professor A.L. Sadler. So far the University of Sydney art collection has purchased over 120 woodblock prints, making it the finest collection of such work in Australia.<sup>4</sup>

*While the Japanese elements in the garden have largely disappeared from Rivenhall, much of the original Sadler-designed landscape survives*

Marsden Hordern's parents purchased Rivenhall from the Sadlers in 1948. Not long after the change of ownership Professor Sadler's Japanese tea hut succumbed to termites and weathering, and was removed. A number of the Roji plants survived for many years, but later the invasive bamboo had to be removed from the garden. The loss of this significant Japanese garden in Sydney is featured in the current Historic Houses Trust's exhibition *Lost Gardens of Sydney*, curated by Colleen Morris (see page 14 for an edited extract from the book *Lost Gardens of Sydney*). While the Japanese elements in the garden have largely disappeared from Rivenhall, much of the original Sadler-designed landscape survives with only a few changes, a respect which reflects the high regard the current owners have for its original creator.

A chance conversation with an older brother in 2007 led **Silas Clifford-Smith** to explore the relationship of his parents with Emeritus Professor Sadler in England during the 1950s and to an encounter with the professor's former Australian house and garden.



Photo: Silas Clifford-Smith

The Rivenhall rear garden, viewed through the front door

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## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Marsden Hordern for his memories of Sadler. Thanks also to Lesley Hordern, Dr Chiaki Ajioka, Colleen Morris, and last but not least to my brother Jonathan Clifford-Smith for kindling my interest in Professor Sadler.

# Professor Sadler's garden at Rivenhall, Warrawee

Colleen Morris

This edited extract from the book *Lost Gardens of Sydney* takes up the story of Professor A.L. Sadler's garden at Rivenhall on Sydney's North Shore, setting his tea garden in the wider context of his influence on Australian garden design.

Arthur Lindsay Sadler had lectured in Japan from 1909 before becoming professor of oriental studies at the University of Sydney in 1922. On his arrival, Sadler and his Anglo-Japanese wife, Eva, had a clear, white 'Tudor' house constructed in the Australian hills of Warrawee.<sup>1</sup> Named Rivenhall, it appeared like an old English country home, 'transplanted by some mysterious agency among the gums and wattles of Sydney'.<sup>2</sup> The garden was an idiosyncratic mixture of the latest English trends, conveyed to Australia through *The Studio* magazine, and traditional Japanese ideas. It reflected the personality of the man himself—highly cultured, shy and modest, Sadler was described as a 'quintessential antiquarian' with a sense of the ridiculous and a habit of wearing an unfashionable broad-brimmed hat with a turned-up rim, English tweeds, and a pince-nez.<sup>3</sup> An article in the *Daily Telegraph* in 1926 conveyed the atmosphere of the garden:

*Paths set like stepping stones in fine green lawn, glimpses of garden, rockery and porch that take one in a flash to Old Italy, a sun-dial whose very shadow breathes of England ... paths set in grass that runs right to the base of the walls, a dimly cool loggia, a sunken garden, unruffled, and spotted with dead leaves, a fountain and water lilies.<sup>4</sup>*

One photograph of the garden shows an 'Italian well head', a popular garden feature of the period, which quickly translated to decorative wishing wells, damned as kitsch by gardeners of 'taste' later in the 20th century. Water irises were featured in the Sadlers' water garden—a rill and rectangular pool overlooked by pavilions at either end.

Sadler prepared translations of Japanese literature and published books on aspects of Japanese culture. He immersed himself in the disciplined aestheticism of the tea ceremony, applying the principles of *Chado* or 'the way of tea' in his construction of a tea garden, while writing about

the tea ceremony and associated arts. Sadler 'isolated' part of his garden and built a Japanese tea house with its own garden and separate entrance from the street.

*Sadler immersed himself in the disciplined aestheticism of the tea ceremony, applying its principles ... in his construction of a tea garden*

In 1932 two issues of *The Home* devoted several pages to photographs and descriptions of the garden. In Sadler's tea garden (*roji*) the lanterns were made of concrete by Sadler himself to traditional Japanese designs—white monuments of simplicity by day that were lit at night to emanate a dull glow. Bright coloured trees are considered out of place in a tea garden and Sadler surrounded his with a tall wall of 'living green' of bamboos and 'giant privet'.<sup>5</sup> In his book *Cha-no-yu* Sadler wrote that:

*The planting of trees in a Tea-garden should be such as to suggest some quiet spot in the woods where all the fresh purity of nature abides in an air of solitary detachment. But the plantation must not be thick enough to produce any feeling of stuffiness or restraint. There should be sufficient trees and shrubs to give an impression of depth, but all must be quite natural, and rare or peculiar specimens or those that bear bright flowers should be omitted.<sup>6</sup>*

After a return visit to Japan in 1933, Sadler considered that Australian gardens would gain much from adapting principles applied there. He advocated the use of proportion to make small gardens appear larger, planting trees and shrubs to gain a sense of enclosure and seclusion. He despaired at the general Australian love of 'horticulture' and the 'desire that nothing shall be concealed from the passer-by'.



Japanese gate to tea garden, Rivendell Warrawee (photographer Harold Cazneaux, 1926); Mitchell Library State Library of New South Wales

Stepping stones, placed to ensure a slowing of the visitor's step and to induce an atmosphere of contemplation, led toward one of the entrance gates of the Sadlers' tea garden. The symmetrically curved length of bamboo from the entrance gate was saved by the current owner and later incorporated into the wishing well feature.



Professor and Mrs Sadler photographed beside the rill at Rivenhall with a 'wishing-well' in the background—wishing wells or Italian well-heads were popular garden features of the period and Sadler cleverly constructed one to disguise a septic tank.

Professor Arthur and Mrs Sadler in the garden at Rivenhall, Warravée (photographer Harold Cazneaux, 1932); Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales



Water garden, Rivenhall, Warrawee (photographer Harold Cazneaux, 1926); Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

Looking back toward an outdoor loggia and the house over the iris pond and rill in Rivenhall's water garden. Here Sadler implemented the idea that the judicious use of water could achieve a sense of coolness—subsequent owners have faithfully retained this aspect of the garden.

He wrote of the judicious use of water to achieve a sense of coolness in warm climates and the possibility of a small garden having the feeling of the bush, even in a heavily populated area.<sup>7</sup>

Professor Sadler's legacy is carried not only in the books he wrote, which helped educate the west about Japan, but also through his students in whom he instilled an understanding of Japanese culture and aesthetics over many years of lecturing at Sydney University. While the experience of World War II placed a strain on the appreciation of things overtly Japanese in the decade that followed, Sydney had gained much from the rich cultural exchange of the 1920s and 1930s.

*Sadler's legacy is carried not only in the books he wrote ... but also through the students in whom he instilled an understanding of Japanese culture and aesthetics*

Professor Sadler's 1928 translation of the 13th century Japanese classic, the *Heike Monogatari* opened with the sentence: 'The sound of the bell at Jetavana echoes the impermanence of all things.'<sup>8</sup> Gardens having such a strong affinity with the personality of the creator can never remain the same when they change ownership. Professor Sadler made a subtle but important contribution in influencing attitudes towards garden design in Australia. His tea garden, however, was transient.

*Lost Gardens of Sydney* by Colleen Morris is published by the Historic Houses Trust (August 2008): RRP \$49.95. Available at all HHT properties, distributed nationally by Thames & Hudson to all good bookshops, and available to AGHS members directly at the discounted price of \$39.95 (plus postage \$5).

'Lost Gardens of Sydney': exhibition at Museum of Sydney, 9 August to 30 November 2008. Sponsored by the Australian Garden History Society. For further details of exhibition-related events visit [www.hht.net.au](http://www.hht.net.au)



Colleen Morris collection

Lavish illustrations, such as that for this water iris, were a feature of the catalogues available in Sydney at the Mikado, a nursery that specialised in bonsai. Japanese plants had become increasingly available in Australia after the Yokohama Nursery Company was established in 1890 and nursery proprietors and others could obtain plants direct from Japan.

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# *Mystery and malevolence: the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens celebrates 190 years*

*Gwenda Sheridan*

The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, located in the Queen's Domain, Hobart, this year celebrates its 190th birthday—or does it? Here, the Garden's earliest years are examined in search of its elusive beginnings.

## **Hobart Town's early government gardens**

The official date for the establishment of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens is 1818, two years after the generally accepted establishment of Sydney's botanic gardens.<sup>1</sup> A very early garden at the Risdon settlement (1803) had quickly been replaced by another at Sullivan's Cove (1804). This latter garden—off Macquarie Street, straddling present-day Collins and Barrack Streets—had a northerly aspect and a gentle slope to the Hobart Rivulet. It existed, at least a part,

until 1847 and the Hutchins School was built on part of the site.

Establishment of a government garden in the Domain was closely linked to the projected relocation of government house from its early Macquarie Street site—an official starting date is fuzzy. In fact it had less to do with a desire to have another government garden some distance from the town than the government's acquisition of a sandstone quarry. Roland Walpole Loane—merchant, absentee landlord, well to-do, and litigious—long insisted that he had purchased



Detail from plan of Hobart's Domain, 1828, clearing showing the fenced enclosure of the government garden (centre right). It is highly likely that the survey authorised by Lieutenant-Governor Arthur in 1825 produced data which contributed to this plan.



Private collection

Construction during the 1860s of a new government house abutting the botanic garden in Hobart's Domain gave the area a new focus. Loane's quarry (obscured to the left in this view) was converted into a picturesque lake and remains a key feature of the government house garden.

Rock Farm on the land comprising the Domain. This farm, whose 'garden' produced wheat, barley, and potatoes, had been Hangan's original grant of 50 acres from Lieutenant-Governor Collins, but the land also contained a valuable outcrop of sandstone much prized for the building of government public works. (*HRA* 3 (1), p.500; 3 (4), pp.721–809.)

Loane arrived back in the colony in 1818 after an absence of five years to find the quarry—which he thought was his—being worked by the government. He placed a bombshell notice in the *Hobart Town Gazette* warning he would prosecute anyone trespassing on Rock Farm and punish those 'breaking out' or removing stone from the quarry opened 'during his absence from this country' (*HTG* 18/7/1818). A flurry of government activity ensued. Lieutenant-Governor Sorell wrote to Governor Macquarie in Sydney, noting the fencing and that the land contained 'Stone-quarries of the Government', but that although 50 acres had been located to Hangan, '[Your] Excellency had determined not to give any grant on that spot' and that 'no official chart of the district' contained any trace of any location on Hangan's Point. (*HRA* 3 (2), p.346.) Macquarie noted in reply that it was his intention 'to reserve the whole of that Ground for the exclusive use of Government' (*HRA* 3 (2), p.353). Finally, in October 1818, a government

notice was published, stating that a fence had been erected 'to enclose the Tract of Government land between Hobart Town and New Town', and that special permission was required 'on pain of being prosecuted with the utmost severity of the Law', and persons were prohibited to cut wood or 'take carts' from the Government ground within the lines of the new fence. (*HTG* 10/10/1818.)

With no title able to be produced by Loane—these had been handed over to and retained by Sorell!—the government remained intractable and throughout the Bigge inquiry of the early 1820s and successive administrations the land was seen as un-alienated Crown Land. (*HRA* 3 (4), pp.785–87.) Lieutenant-Governor Arthur subsequently instigated a survey of the 50 acres in 1825 with the surveyors finding 'the farm', a 'valuable free stone quarry', and 'nearly the whole of the Government Garden' (CSO 1/414/9307/43).

Meanwhile from 1 April to 30 June 1818, one J. Faber had been paid £5 for 'superintendence of Government Grounds and Garden', apparently the earliest evidence of gardening in Hobart Town's Domain. (*HTG* 9/1/1819.) The controversial fence—of 'Posts, Rails and Paling seven Feet high'—enclosing the 'Lt. Governor's Garden' appeared in a list of works for 1819 while six prisoners were listed as employed in the 'Govt. Gardens'. (*HRA* 3 (3), pp.554, 559–60.) This

garden was set within wider surrounds of the large Government Paddock or Domain but early recorded activity remains sparse. A sum of £3 was paid to Thomas Banks for 'Hurdles for the Government Garden' in December 1819, while one J. Clarke was paid £5 as 'extra labour' in the Government Garden in April 1820. (HTG 4/12/1819; 1/4/1820.)

In May 1824 Lieutenant-Governor Arthur succeeded Sorell and so began a period of careful administration, including many changes within the Domain government garden. By October 1826, Arthur requested from his London superiors a wide range of plants, including grass seed, wheat, corn, herbs, the root crop 'Mangel Wurzel', legumes, turnips, 'ornamental forest trees', berries, flowers, roses, 'firs', and many others. (HRA 3 (5), pp.366–68.) Arthur is on record as wanting 'a botanical Garden' which urged 'should be proceeded with' without delay. (CSO 1/194/4588/page.)

### **Botanical or Gentleman's Garden?**

Arthur's 1826 plant request arrived in the early months of 1829, just as William Davidson had became superintendent of the Domain Garden. It is highly likely that some plants came from the London Horticultural Society: the Colonial Agent had received directions in early 1827 to 'put himself in communication with the Horticultural Society with regard to the remainder' (HRA 3 (5), p.615). Due to the vagaries of transport plants were sent as acorns, berries, cones, nuts, and other seeds (of wheat, barley, turnips, vegetables, grasses, and trees, for example) by the peck, pound, or bushel, but there may also have been actual seedlings. One spruce fir, 50 oaks, 25 Turkey oaks, 100 elm, 100 ash, and 100 white thorn were among plants listed, the total list price being £43 17s 9s. (CSO 1/292/7139/229–34.) Substantial built works were also quickly begun. By February 1829 a stone cottage for Davidson and his men had been erected while plans of the heated 'Arthur Wall' and accompanying hot house were approved by May that year. (CSO 1/292/7139/237, 245–48, 264–65, 283, 284–87.) James Ross, in his 1830 *Hobart Town Almanack*, also noted 'green houses'. Labour too had increased exponentially—'12 gardeners, and 12 of the Chain Gang' were employed by August 1830, by which date nearly 13 acres of garden ground had been enclosed. (CSO 1/292/7139/260.) Requisite permission was required for garden needs, however, whether these were large or small—including water barrows, straw, manure, and pots for fruit and vegetables such as cucumbers, mushrooms, pineapples, vines, and fruits (apples and peaches, and possibly pears and 'plumbs').

(CSO 1/292/7139.) Letters had to pass laboriously through the colonial administrative system to Arthur himself for approval. Additionally Davidson encountered labour problems, especially with some convicts.

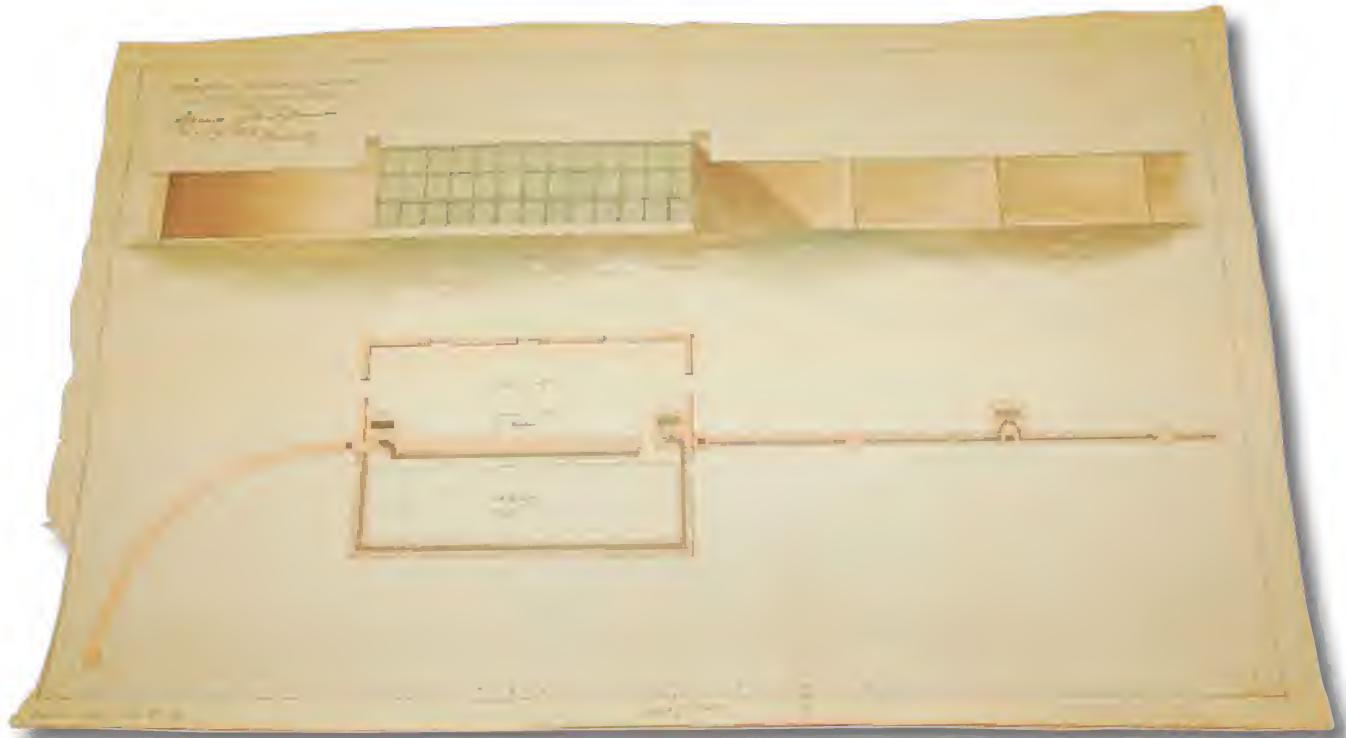
Officially in files the garden was never called a 'botanic' garden despite the best efforts of the Van Diemen's Land Society (established 1829) which urged the creation of a 'botanical, experimental and economic garden, a museum and a library' (HTC 19/12/1829). It is *Hobart Town Almanacks* of James Ross and visitor comments which provide clues to plants other than those comprising the 'striking luxuriance of the kitchen garden'. In 1831 Ross noted that 'the botanist will be pleased to see a collection by no means contemptible of exotic plants, the seeds of which have been introduced by gentlemen arriving in the colony from India, South America and other parts of the world'.<sup>2</sup> In 1833 though, Baron von H gel, Austrian scientist, and aristocrat, visited the 'so-called' botanical garden finding only a few indigenous Tasmanian plants, but two Norfolk Island pines (*Araucaria excelsa*).<sup>3</sup> Although von H gel used the description 'so-called', in official files at this time the garden was referred to as the Government Garden or the Domain Garden, not as a botanical garden. Mr E. Markham some months later saw the 'prettily laid out' garden with its two 'beautiful' Norfolk Island pines, the whole place with 'an air of a Gentleman's Garden'.<sup>4</sup>

### **A sad story of superintendents**

Other than Faber's brief superintendence, the earliest person in charge of the colonial garden is unknown but it seems likely that there were a number of overseers for the first ten years, probably from the Government Farm. For example, under the 'Detailed Estimates of Colonial Revenue' (1827–28) four Overseers at £10 each are listed for the Government Stock and Farms. (HRA 3 (6), p.428.)

In 1821 Sorell had issued a sharp notice in the *Hobart Gazette* that the 'late Overseer of the Government Garden having been in the habit of selling the produce to a great Extent without any permission' had been dismissed; this for the reason of disposing 'of the produce' (HTG 8/9/1821). Lieutenant-Governor Arthur made reference to a Mr Ayton in charge in 1826 having 'knowledge and abilities' (HTG 1/7/1826), while Overseer Moore was there in late December 1828. By this time it was seen that someone of 'superior description' to him was required. (CSO 1/292/7139/268.)

Writing to the Colonial Secretary in 1828, Judge Advocate Edward Abbott was enthusiastic in



Archives Office of Tasmania (CSO 1/292/7139/28)

The 1829 plans of Hobart's hot house and heated wall—whose total cost was £179 9s 4d (including glass, the most expensive component at £37 17s)—are probably the most sophisticated surviving plans for an early colonial Australian horticultural structure.

respect of the potential appointment of William Davidson. From Northumberland, 24 years old, unmarried, with skilfulness as a gardener, the winner of many prizes at botanical and horticultural societies of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Abbott felt Davidson's credentials 'cannot be disputed'. (CSO 1/292/7139/268, 217–18.) Davidson performed very capably in his superintendent's position until his abrupt departure in September 1834. The *Colonial Times*—the only newspaper to report the incident (CT 16/9/1834)—wrote of the '4 cabbages, 4 turnips, 4 cauliflowers' story resulting in Davidson's instant dismissal by Arthur. This too was seen as 'disposing of the produce of the Government Garden'—in reality it was produce sent to the Commissariat store in return for tea and sugar for a proposed inland expedition. One gets a sense from the official files of the infuriatingly tight rein that Arthur held over trifling expenses (such as clay pots or straw) whilst approving far larger items like the hot house and heated wall. (CSO 1/292/7139/217–402.) Davidson did much during his tenure to enhance the botanic nature of the garden, perhaps in response to the 1829 proposal to establish a rival garden by the newly formed Van Diemen's Land Society.

Martin Tobin followed Davidson. His credentials to take charge are unknown as is the reason for his sudden dismissal on 2 December 1840.<sup>5</sup> An uncorroborated note in the Archives Office of Tasmania's Wayn Index suggests that Tobin was

'dismissed by Lieutenant Governor Franklin for want of interest in preparing and judging exhibits in connection with Horticultural Society's Show held 15th instant [i.e. December 1840].'  
At the inaugural Horticultural Society Show held at Pavilion Point (in conjunction with the Hobart Regatta) Tobin also supposedly 'Refused exhibitors use of watering can to refresh plants for the second day of the Show'. A. Herbertson was appointed 3 January 1841.<sup>6</sup>

### The Franklin influence

After the arrival in January 1837 of the new Lieutenant Governor, Sir John Franklin, and his wife Lady Jane Franklin, the momentum of the Domain Garden changed yet again. In December 1836 it had been noted 'we are nevertheless without a Botanical Garden'—this letter from George Frankland to the Colonial Secretary referred the government to the visit of Dr Lhotsky (see *Australian Garden History* 19 (5), pp.10–14), and that possibly his services might be engaged as a Colonial Naturalist.<sup>7</sup> Three years later came a plea, 'if the Government Garden is too large for the Governor's Table let a portion of it be set aside for botanical purposes' (CT 24/12/1839). The *Colonial Times* in 1837 had sniped that the garden was 'in very excellent order' growing 'splendid guinea cabbages' (CT 4/7/1837). The following year saw the garden 'in a deplorable state' due to a lack of 'gardeners', with 'tinkers, tailors and other unsuitable craftsmen' responsible for upkeep.

(CT 28/8/1838.) At this time there were the three government gardens in Hobart—that attached to Government House in Macquarie Street, the original Macquarie Street garden, and the Domain garden, as well as the colonial garden in Launceston and a garden attached to the Governor's residence at New Norfolk. The cost of the government gardens rose swiftly under the Franklins from £327 15s in 1837 to £738 7s 6d (1839) and by June 1841 to £820. (CT 4/7/1837; 28/5/1839; 15/6/1841.)

*Horticulture and botany had become much more fashionable pursuits amongst a wider community bringing with it enhanced expectations*

Reasons for the expressed negativity were complex. One was the cost, and another the restrictions on garden visiting. As well, horticulture and botany had become much more fashionable pursuits amongst a wider community bringing with it enhanced expectations. A cohort of gentlemen

in the north had established the Launceston Horticultural Society (1838) with Ronald Gunn its first president. With a defined vision the Society corresponded with the Horticultural Society of London. When Gunn came south to become Sir John Franklin's private secretary, he helped establish the Hobart Horticultural Society (1839) becoming a Secretary of this Society. In addition, Gunn, who corresponded with Sir William Hooker, then Professor of Botany at Glasgow and soon to be director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, assisted Lady Jane Franklin in her efforts to establish a private botanical 'mountain' garden in the Sassafras Valley on the New Town Rivulet (later called Ancanthe). This 'botanic garden' was for a 'Collection of our indigenous Plants', Gunn applying to Hooker in 1838 for a suitable gardener.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile Joseph Hooker, in Hobart aboard the *Erebus* and *Terror* Antarctic voyage of 1840, and later to replace his father at Kew, visited Lady Franklin's garden seven times.<sup>9</sup> Louisa Meredith at the foundation stone laying of Franklin's abortive government house project in 1840 nevertheless was 'charmed' by the aspect of the Domain gardens, yet feeling they were 'very English-looking gardens'.<sup>10</sup>



View of the 'Jardin botanique D'Hobart Town (Ile Van Diemen)' from *Voyage au P le Sud et dans L'Océanie ... pendant les années 1837-1838-1839-1840* (Paris, 1841-55) of the French explorer Dumont d'Urville. This expedition landed at Hobart in 1839, staying for two weeks, sufficient for this engraved view showing the botanic garden hot house to be sketched.

WL Crowther Library State Library of Tasmania

The Domain garden came into being late in 1818 or early 1819. Gentleman's garden it was: any claim to 'botanical' status less assured. It might have fitted in fact to Dr John Henderson's comment: 'By all means let the Governor have his fruits from his orchards, let the burgesses haven their promenades ... [but] the object of a Botanic Garden ... as a public institution ... is to introduce and improve ... every species of cultivation.'<sup>11</sup> As a public institution and a defined botanical garden, though, this garden had to wait until Sir Eardley Wilmot and the creation of the Royal Society of Tasmania in 1843.

### Abbreviations

**CSO** Colonial Secretary's Office: these manuscript files are all held by the Archives Office of Tasmania

**CT** *Colonial Times*

**HTC** *Hobart Town Courier*

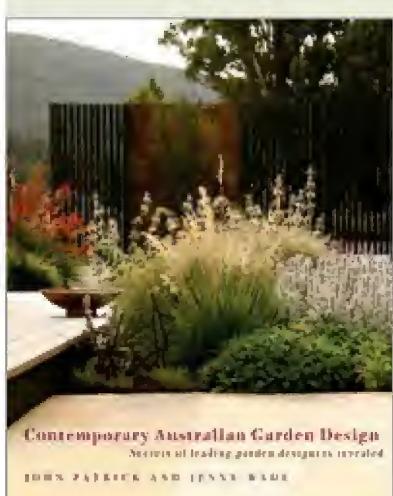
**HTG** *Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter*, later the *Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser*: these published newspapers are available on microfilm in the National Library of Australia and major reference libraries

**HRA** *Historical Records of Australia*, noting relevant series, volume, and page numbers: these published volumes are held by major reference libraries

**Gwenda Sheridan** is a Hobart-based geographer and researcher with a strong interest in cultural landscapes. She has prepared background histories for many of Tasmania's most significant parks and gardens as part of the conservation planning process.

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# Jan Seto (1950–2008): an appreciation

We note with regret the news that Jan Seto died on Anzac Day this year after a long illness. Jan chaired the AGHS Queensland Branch for many years, and indeed was instrumental in re-establishing the Branch in 1993. She was also involved with many other aspects of the Society, including the 1996 Toowoomba conference, the first to be held in Queensland and ‘made possible because of Jan’s gentle and wise leadership’. So wrote colleague Jeannie Sim in her tribute in the *AGHS Queensland Branch Newsletter* (July 2008). Writing about Jan’s long and productive professional career as an architect and landscape architect, Jeannie continued ‘Her life work was diverse but never far from her passion for caring for the natural and cultural environment.’ In another tribute in the Australian

Institute of Landscape Architects Queensland Group’s publication *QueenslandMark* (Winter 2008), colleague Shealagh Savage wrote ‘Jan was never fazed by anything, always positive, full of enthusiasm and energy, fun and always with a ready smile and bright eyes. She had an enquiring mind and was very clever and artistic. She always had a project and was always busy, but never forgetting her family.’ Jan left a touching record of her thoughts in a blog for Breast Cancer Network Australia ([www.bcna.org.au/content/view/690/1/](http://www.bcna.org.au/content/view/690/1/)): ‘There is so much more about the richness of life experiences I have yet to share and enjoy.’ In appreciation for this rich life, we chronicle Jan’s major writings in her chosen professional field.

## Major writings

**1993** Jan Seto & Jeannie Sim, ‘Queen’s Gardens, Brisbane: an historic city space under threat’, *Australian Garden History*, 4 (6), May/June 1993, pp.9–11.

**1994** Jan Seto, ‘Liveable Brisbane?’, *Australian Garden History*, 6 (2), Sept/Oct 1994, p.3.

**1995** Jan Seto, ‘Guest editorial’, *Australian Garden History*, 6 (6), May/June 1995, p.2.

**1996** Jeannie Sim & Jan Seto, *Inventory of Historic Cultural Landscapes in Queensland*, Australian Garden History Society, Queensland Branch, Manly West, Qld., 1996.

**1998** Jeannie Sim & Jan Seto, ‘Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in Australia: Northern Territory’, published as an appendix to Richard Aitken, Jan Schapper, Juliet Ramsay, & Michael Looker (eds), *A Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in Australia: national overview report*, Burnley College, The University of Melbourne, [Melbourne], 1998.

**2001** Jan Seto, ‘The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and its environs’ and ‘Glass House Mountains region’, in Jeannie Sim & Helen Armstrong (eds), *Investigating Queensland’s Cultural landscapes: contested terrains series. Report 4: reports of the case studies*, Cultural Landscape Research Unit, Queensland University of Technology, 2001, pp.43–70, 71–100.

**2001** Jan Seto & Margaret Cook, *The Brisbane River as an element of designed landscapes*, Produced by the Cultural Heritage Branch, Environmental Protection Agency of Queensland, for the Brisbane River Management Group, Brisbane, 2001.

**2002** Jan Seto & Margaret Cook, ‘Central Moreton Bay as an element of designed landscapes’, Report for the Moreton Bay Waterways and Catchments Partnership and the Environmental Protection Agency of Queensland, Brisbane, 2002.

**2002** ‘Bleeser, Florenz August Karl’ (jointly with Anita Angel); ‘Brown, George’; ‘Darwin Botanic Gardens’ (jointly with Anita Angel); ‘Fitzpatrick (n e Johnson), (Alice) May’ (jointly with Anita Angel); ‘Horticultural Societies: Northern Territory’ (jointly with Anita Angel); ‘Northern Territory’ (jointly with Anita Angel); ‘Oakman, Henry Octave (Harry)’ (jointly with Jeannie Sim); entries in Richard Aitken & Michael Looker (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*, Oxford University Press in association with the Australian Garden History Society, South Melbourne, Vic., 2002, pp.93, 106, 176, 220, 314–15, 445–46, 449.

**2008** Rosemary J. Kennedy, John Hockings, Daryl Lowchoy, & Jan Seto, *Response to the Draft SEQ Regional Plan*, Technical Report, The Centre for Subtropical Design, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, 2008.

# *National Management Committee profile: Lynne Walker*

**Lynne Walker** joined the Australian Garden History Society's National Management Committee in October 2007 bringing with her ten years' experience as Northern NSW Co-ordinator for Australia's Open Garden Scheme and a lifetime of gardening.

*You played a pivotal role in championing the need for a sub-branch of the Australian Garden History Society that covered northern New South Wales. What were the main factors that influenced your resolution to do this?*

While a considerable amount of research has been undertaken and an incredible depth of knowledge exists collectively on extant (and 'lost') historic gardens and cultural landscapes in Sydney and other parts of New South Wales, the nature and extent of the garden history resource in northern New South Wales is a relatively unknown and untapped resource. And that lack of knowledge equates to a relatively high level of risk for potentially significant places out there, that we simply don't know about. It came across so strongly that without that knowledge, our historic gardens and cultural landscapes are so vulnerable. As well, the house and garden I was brought up in as a child was already 100 years old when I was born—and that's over 50 years ago—so I have always been drawn to old properties.

*For readers who don't know the region so well, what are some of the larger centres in northern NSW and what distinguishes historic gardens in the region?*

Technically, we are the New England/Northwest sub-branch encompassing Tamworth in the south, Moree and Tenterfield in the northwest, and Glen Innes in the east. There is a real need for more sub-branches in those areas of northern New South Wales, such as the coast, the Central West, and the Newcastle/Hunter Valley regions, which are very different to our sub-branch.

The distances between towns are vast and the area is strongly characterised by a sense of space. As well, with Uralla and Armidale at more than 1000 metres above sea level for example, the gardens are distinguished by the fairly cool summers and bracing winters. But the area the branch covers is immense. Within that area there is much variation in climate, topography, and altitude.

So, while gardens in the higher-altitude places such as Armidale are distinguished by the use of cool-climate plants, the lower, outer-lying parts of the region and those lower areas east of the Great Dividing Range, are different again.

*And some of the successes since establishing the new sub-branch?*

The aim continues to be enthusing local people about their garden history. What we've managed to do in the short time since establishing the northern New South Wales sub-branch in 2005 is provide a focal point for interested, interesting, committed, and knowledgeable local people who want to understand and protect historic gardens in this vast area. We have tried to raise the profile of the organisation and of historic gardens in particular by opening some of the gardens as part of Australia's Open Garden Scheme. Last season, Ben Lomond Station attracted 900 visitors which was astonishing. This coming season we are opening five historic gardens in the New England area alone. Another success is the research that has begun and continues to be assembled by some of our local members.

*Would you say that since joining the Australian Garden History Society, you look at gardens, particular historic gardens, any differently?*

Yes, I suppose I've changed tack slightly. While I used to enjoy a garden just as it is, in its current form, I am now also curious to understand how it was originally, and how it's evolved over time. I am also consumed with a burning curiosity to unearth more old gardens!



# For the bookshelf

John Macarthur, *The Picturesque: architecture, disgust and other irregularities*, Routledge, London & New York, 2007 (ISBN 978 1 84472 011 8): paperback RRP \$65

This book forms a relative rarity in the canon of garden history writings as a work of international scholarship by a locally based Australian author. The author himself has a rather picturesque history—he is descended from the old New South Wales Macarthur family of The Vineyard. But this is not a book about old-school ties. It is, in many ways, a revolutionary new synthesis and analysis of a familiar genre, dramatically expanded chronologically to bring it into the present.

The Picturesque in its capitalised form generally refers to an aesthetic movement of the late eighteenth century—Macarthur gives a date span of 1780–1830 as its apotheosis—with critical publications in 1794–95. These works, Uvedale Price's *Essay on the Picturesque*, Richard Payne Knight's *The Landscape: a didactic poem, and Humphry Repton's Sketches and Hints on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*—prompted a vigorous debate regarding links between landscape painting and landscape gardening, especially the degree on which the former should guide the latter.

The 'pre-history' of this debate can be traced well back into the eighteenth century and earlier. Macarthur spends some time establishing the key role played by the Reverend William Gilpin, especially through his illustrated topographic publications which encouraged a vogue for 'picturesque travel', territory amply covered by the scholarship of Malcolm Andrews. Gilpin encouraged a generation to view scenery through the eyes of a painter and to use an analysis of such landscapes to underpin a picturesque (generally lower case, and often quite diffuse) approach to garden making.

So much is well known, and draws on successive scholarship of Christopher Hussey, Nicolas Pevsner, David Watkin, and John Dixon Hunt (although the latter seems not to have greatly influenced the author). Where Macarthur starts to break new ground is his willingness to follow Pevsner especially, in seeing the Picturesque as a continuing influence on design. Although this book specifically addresses architecture, the very basis of the Picturesque in landscape scenery means that much



of Macarthur's material is applicable to gardens and designed landscapes.

It is the continuing 'uptake, development and impact' of the concept that makes this book an especially valuable contribution to the literature.

Macarthur traces diluted picturesque attitudes in such things as the British Townscape movement of the 1940s and 1950s. Disgust was a key emotion of the polemicists of the 1790s, and Macarthur uses this—and such cognate concepts as irregularity, appropriation, and movement—as a filter for his analysis.

If, for example, we feel disgust at a twee cottage garden in an otherwise progressive neighbourhood of gardens, then we may also feel disgust at the lingering influence of the Picturesque in restrictive planning controls aimed at producing conformity rather than encouraging originality. This is not a specific example put forward by Macarthur, but a line of reasoning embodied in his approach. Australian examples might be isolated using Macarthur's analysis. I feel sure that the influence of William Hardy Wilson and his appreciation of Australia's old colonial architecture would fall into the author's framework.

Although indexed and thoroughly referenced, a bibliography would befit a scholarly and complex work such as this. Not exactly bedtime reading, but certainly worthy of sustained attention by those wishing for a new understanding of a key aesthetic movement.

**Richard Aitken**

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Allyson Hayward, *Norah Lindsay: the life and art of a garden designer*, Frances Lincoln, London, 2007 (ISBN 978 0 711 22524 4): hardback RRP \$89.95

Norah Lindsay, until the publication of this biography, has flitted through the annals of garden history like an elusive butterfly hovering over an English herbaceous border.

Lindsay (1873–1948) was a beautiful, witty, well-connected socialite who made a renowned garden at the Manor House, Sutton Courtney, Oxfordshire. In the 1930s the garden was as talked about as her lavish parties and her clothes; the *laissez-faire* style she favoured in her borders was in stark contrast to the bright and tidy flower beds redolent of the Victorian era. Norah loved plants to spill and flop about; she is said to have told one head gardener that she 'loved lilies, lazily lolling'.

However, all this lazy lolling came to an end when her marriage broke up and she was compelled, at 51, to garden professionally to earn a living. She started to charge her friends for her design and planting ideas and her hard work. The clients might have been the *cr me de la cr me*—the Astors at Cliveden, Sir Philip Sassoon at Trent, Lawrence Johnson at Hidcote and Serre de la Madone in France, and the Prince of Wales at Fort Belvedere—but she was out in all weathers; in her seventies she had to start the day at five, working out plant lists in bed and then outside in the garden all day. ‘The truth is having to stand in the rain two days running and then sleeping in an icy room with all the radiators cut off made me too abominably frozen for words’, she wrote.

The gardens she visited in France and Italy in sunnier times were to be great sources of inspiration for her. The style she evolved for her high-profile clients—generous planting punctuated by geometric shapes of box and yew evergreens—was widely emulated and is arguably her greatest legacy. She was also the originator of blue-painted garden furniture—long before the National Trust took up the idea—and her knowledge of plants was certainly hands-on. She would travel down to Hilliers, the shrub and tree specialists in Hampshire, to select the choicest, joking that ‘when I die, Magnolia will be written on my heart’!

American garden historian, Allyson Hayward, has spent ten years researching Norah Lindsay’s life and work, through letters, diaries, photographs, and secondary sources. She has put the social butterfly image under the microscope and has pinned down, through careful examination, a truly creative talent.

In the many black and white photographs in the book, the garden at Sutton Courtney in 1931 gives a wonderful sense of ‘the overall effect of thoughtless abundance and a pleasurable experience’, the effect she aimed to create. Russell Page wrote of her: ‘Norah Lindsay could, by her plantings, evoke all the pleasures of the flower garden. She lifted herbaceous planting into a poetic category and gave it an air of rapture and spontaneity.’

**Christine Reid**

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**Paul Memmott, *Gunyah, Goondie + Wurley: the Aboriginal architecture of Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld, 2007 (ISBN 978 0 7022 3245 9): hardback RRP \$90**

This fine new book by Paul Memmott is the author’s magnum opus, and the production values deployed by the University of Queensland Press are well up to the expectations of such works. It is one of the most sumptuous Australian trade bindings in recent times—a deeply satisfying blend of brown cloth (yes,

cloth, not paper stamped to simulate cloth), deep red-toned ‘leather’ (perhaps organic, perhaps not), copper-foil lettering, with a blind-stamped cover vignette. Turning the pages this combination is reflected in colour and generosity of layout.

At first I was slightly puzzled by this richness for a book on Australia’s Aboriginal architecture—yet this was only momentary for the book is engrossing and the lavish treatment seems a fitting acknowledgement of the subject and its significance. Memmott has spent decades compiling the raw material for the book, and its presentation deserves the care bestowed on comparable masterworks, such as E. Graeme Robertson’s books of the 1960s on early Tasmanian architecture or cast iron decoration. And here, architecture is seen in a wide perspective from traditions of site planning to innovative use of natural materials.

Befitting its subject this is a very collaborative effort and Memmott is the first to acknowledge this in his illuminating introduction. The work has a theoretical basis in ethno-architectural studies yet touches on many disciplines: material culture, economic theories of hunter-gather seasonality, scheduling, exchange, and intensification; environmental ethno-science; proxemics and territoriality; kinship, social organisation and land tenure; group identity and theory of ‘self’; ethno-archaeology; religion, totemism and semiotics; cultural change theory; and ecological psychology and settling theories. If this sounds daunting, the author’s engaging text and the generous use of diagrams and other illustrations should place unsettled minds at rest.

This is a book for the commendation of all Australians. The architecture here is not just something from a past age—it is a continuum which has resonances for contemporary communities struggling to reconcile past injustices with expectations of modern society.

**Richard Aitken**

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**John Watkins & Tom Wright (eds), *Management and Maintenance of Historic Parks, Gardens and Landscapes: the English Heritage handbook*, Frances Lincoln, London, 2007 (ISBN 978 0 7112243 9 1): hardback RRP \$89.95**

This work, by two veterans in the field, is a welcome look at current heritage practice in England, and more especially from the perspective of the state-run organisation English Heritage. Structured in three parts, the book provides an overview of the principles and guidelines used to underpin their conservation management decisions and maintenance (including an extract from the

Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter*), a summary history of landscape gardening in England, as well as legal and other planning frameworks. The second section, 'The living garden landscape', comprises practical advice for managing both the organic elements of gardens, nature conservation, and the technical maintenance of built elements within the landscape. Appendices of plant tables, references, and information on funding bodies and grant opportunities, supplement this section—all of which are quite specific to an English context. While structured largely for a British audience

and specifically the conservation and maintenance of historic parks, gardens, and landscapes within England, this is a refreshing volume to browse, not least because of the large-format images and the ten case studies in the final part of the book. As well, as a kind of yardstick against which to measure heritage practice in Australia, this book draws attention to the fact that here too are independently good models and successful examples of sound heritage practice—perhaps just not quite the same level of resources to support a staff of 19 gardeners, as is the case at Chatsworth.

Christina Dyson

## Recently released

Duncan Campbell (trans), *A Personal Record of My Garden of Reflection by Zheng Yuanxun*, Asian Studies Institute (Victoria University of Wellington), Wellington, NZ, 2007 (ISBN 0 476 01095 0): unstitched paper (contact the publisher for pricing and further details, PO Box 600, Wellington, NZ)

This modest publication translates into English a Chinese manuscript (1643) describing the author's garden at Yangzhou. The bulk of the account provides readers with a tour of the garden, setting it with a wider context of traditional and contemporary Chinese garden-making.

Libby Hathorn, *Georgiana: woman of flowers*, Hachette, Sydney, 2008 (ISBN 978 0 7336 0916 9): paperback RRP \$17.99

From this well-known writer for young adults comes a new biography of Georgiana Molloy. For the interested reader this will provide an engaging introduction to Molloy's life and career in Australia's west during the 1830s–40s. For some hopefully it may just be the start of an interest in botany and garden history—a good stocking filler for the special younger family member or friend.

Andrew Leach, Antony Moulis & Nicole Sully (eds), *Shifting Views: selected essays on the architectural history of Australia and New Zealand*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld, 2008 (ISBN 978 0 7022 3660 0): paperback RRP \$59.95

Architectural history has long maintained a close relationship with garden history, and so this new compilation—which provides a snapshot of the most incisive local scholarship over the past two decades—will interest those with a serious interest in these complementary disciplines. Contributors whose names may be known to a garden history audience include Judith Brine, Stanislaus Fung,

Paul Walker, Joan Kerr, and Duncan Richards. UQP also publishes the SAHANZ journal *Fabrications*. These substantial annual paperback volumes are often themed and the most recent issue is entitled 'On Style'. If you've already asked for a new pair of secateurs for Christmas, perhaps these are not the volumes for you.

Shirley Sherwood & Martyn Rix, *Treasures of Botanical Art: icons from the Shirley Sherwood and Kew collection*, Kew Publishing, Richmond, Surrey, 2008 (ISBN 978 1 84246 221 8): hardback RRP \$79.95 (distributed in Australia by Florilegium).

Two well-known names from the world of botanical art bring together a fine collection of early and contemporary works, a large percentage not previously reproduced. Notable amongst these are fine representations from Australian artists, the beauty and accuracy of whose work can be judged alongside international comparisons.

Volkhard Wehner (ed.), *A Year in my Garden, by Mrs Arthur Tuckett; to which is appended the story of the 'lost garden of Murrumbeena' and its owners*, The author, Glen Iris, Vic., 2008 (ISBN 978 0 9775 2482 2): paperback RRP \$42 plus postage (limited edition, available from the author, PO Box 1002, Hartwell, Vic. 3124)

Mrs Tuckett's *A Year in my Garden* (1905) is a well known yet relatively scarce Australian book of garden writing. Now it has been brought back into print with the added benefit of a biographical essay, the fruit of considerable detective work on the author's part. In addition to Mrs Tuckett's breezy prose, the story of the successive owners—the Tuckett and Springthorpe families—makes intriguing reading. Notable figures such as Burnley principal, C. Bogue-Luffmann, also appear in the biographical text, filling out our picture of gardening in the Edwardian and inter-war eras.

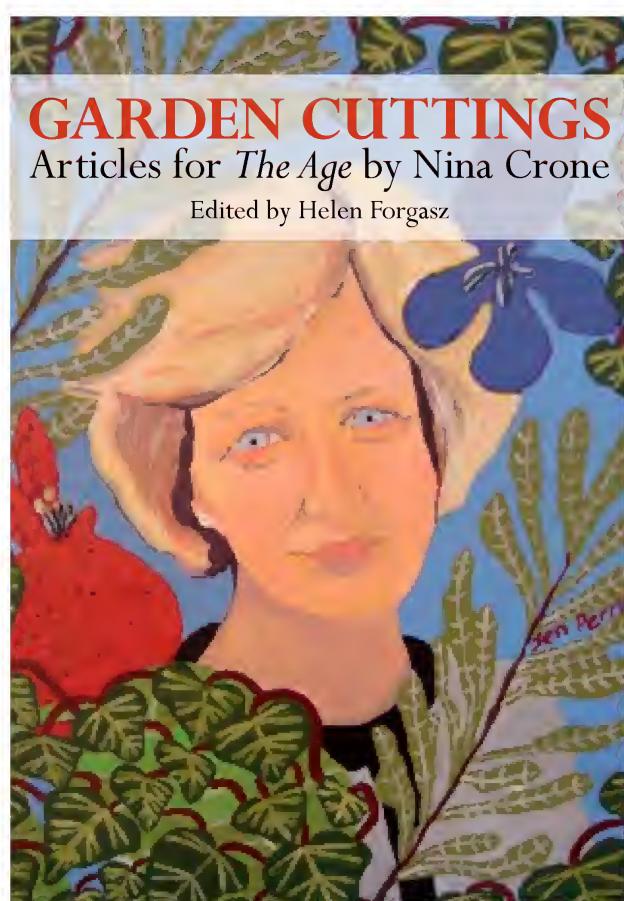
## 28th Annual General Meeting

The 28th Annual General Meeting of the Australian Garden History Society Inc. will be held on Saturday, 11 October 2008, at 8.15am at Oxley College, Railway Parade, Burradoo, NSW. There are no vacancies for elected positions on the National Management Committee this year.

## Garden Cuttings by Nina Crone

The book *Garden Cuttings: Articles for The Age by Nina Crone* was launched in Melbourne recently. Nina Crone was editor of *Australian Garden History* from 2001–06 and a strong supporter of the Australian Garden History Society. This compilation of her newspaper articles has been published with generous support from several organisations—including the AGHS—and its garden content was greatly assisted by the editorial role of Victorian branch committee member Helen Botham. Copies are available at \$45 (including postage) from the Business Office, Melbourne Girls Grammar School: fax 03 98661119 or e-mail:

[marilyn.lowe@mggs.vic.edu.au](mailto:marilyn.lowe@mggs.vic.edu.au).



## New director for Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales

Following an international search, Kate Clark has been appointed director of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales to replace Peter Watts (see editorial and story on page 7). Australian-born, Kate Clark has long international experience in heritage, working in museums, the voluntary, educational, and state sectors. She has written extensively on heritage management, historical archaeology, and the wider value of heritage in the modern world.

[www.hht.net.au](http://www.hht.net.au)

## Special offer for AGHS members

If you enjoy visiting historic houses and gardens, why not consider becoming a member of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, with free admission every day to HHT properties and exhibitions plus a stimulating program of events and tours. The Historic Houses Trust is currently offering AGHS members a bonus 3 months membership—15 months for the normal price of twelve. Telephone HHT on (02) 8239 2266 or complete the specially marked membership form inserted in this issue of the journal.

## Street trees in residential communities: does size matter?

This workshop on Thursday, 23 October 2008, has been organised by the New South Wales group of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. Discussion will focus on street trees in new residential communities—how big should trees go, how should they be protected, and what are optimum growing environments? Speakers include Ingrid Mather (JMD Design), Sarah Renwick (Material Landscape Architecture), and Craig Rich (Alpine Nurseries).

[www.aila.org.au/nsw/events](http://www.aila.org.au/nsw/events)

## Professional Historians Association Queensland 2009 conference

'Journeys through Queensland's History: landscape, place and society' will focus on shifting perspectives in Queensland's history and historiography, and how these have informed the present and—potentially—the future. Abstracts are due by 29 November 2008, and completed papers by 1 June 2009. For further information contact Janice Cooper via [conference@qld.historians.org.au](mailto:conference@qld.historians.org.au).

[www.qld.historians.org.au](http://www.qld.historians.org.au)

# Dialogue

## Monaro revisited

In the last issue of *Australian Garden History*, we incorrectly listed the photograph on page 27 as Bobundara homestead. Unlike the homestead in that photograph, which sits on a knoll within the broad expanse of the Monaro, Bobundara homestead as described by its owner Trisha Dixon is 'nestled in a valley, embraced by hills and a creek that flows through the garden with views onto one of the few rare natural eucalypt hills'.



Trisha Dixon

Bobundara homestead, here nestled in its accustomed position in the Monaro landscape.

## Jean O'Neill (1915–2008)

Stuart Read forwards an obituary from the *Sydney Morning Herald* (25 August 2008) for British-born Katherine Jean O'Neill (née Whitaker), who in 1944 married a former aide-de-camp to South Australian governor Sir Charles Barclay-Harvey—O'Neill's husband, Terence, went on to become prime minister of Ireland. The obituary recalls Jean O'Neill as 'a horticulturist of international reputation and garden historian with a passion for Australian flora', well demonstrated by her garden in southern England. She was related through her daughter-in-law to South Australia's Downer family and had just repotted her Wollemi pine before a fatal stroke.

## Oriental garden history

Following Jennifer Mitchelhill's article on Japanese gardens in our last issue, James Beattie from the University of Waikato's History Department writes with news of New Zealand garden history activities, enclosing a jointly authored paper entitled 'Japanese gardens and plants in New Zealand, 1850–1950: transculturation and transmission' just published by *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*. James has also recently edited a small book entitled *Lan Yuan: the garden of enlightenment* comprising essays on the intellectual, cultural, and

architectural background to the Dunedin Chinese Garden (available from the publisher, the Dunedin Chinese Gardens Trust, c/- Cook, North & Wong, PO Box 867, Dunedin, New Zealand).

## Australian Urban Tree Charter

*Australian Garden History* editors have recently initiated discussion with Sarah Renwick, of Material Landscape Architecture, regarding an Australian Urban Tree Charter, which she is currently drafting on behalf of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. The tree charter concept formed the focus of an AILA forum on tree management, held in Sydney in May 2005. The Australian Urban Tree Charter is intended to complement the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter and the Natural Heritage Charter, providing principles for managing significant trees in urban environments. It will endeavour to provide a consistent framework for tree management applicable to institutional managers, professionals, and the broader community. We will bring you updates on the status of this document as drafts come to hand.

## SEBRA PRINTS

ANTIQUE PRINTS AND MAPS



'Sweet Peas', colour woodcut by John Hall Thorpe, c.1920

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# Diary dates

## OCTOBER 2008

### *Historic Medlow*

Victoria

#### **Wednesday 1**

Members and friends morning tea and garden tour. 10.30–12.30pm, 42 Warrigal Road, Surrey Hills (Melway 46, J12). Cost: \$15. For bookings contact Kathy Wright on (03) 9596 2041 or [kwright1@bigpond.com](mailto:kwright1@bigpond.com)

### *North Bruny Island*

Tasmania

#### **Saturday 4**

Day trip visiting historic Morella, Hiba, Cheverton, and Woodlands. 9.15am at Kettering, returning on the 4.30pm ferry. Cost: \$50 members, \$55 non-members (includes bus travel, morning tea, lunch, and garden visits). Bookings essential by 22 September to Rex Bean on (03) 6260 4418 or [rex.bean@bigpond.com](mailto:rex.bean@bigpond.com)

### *Sydney's lost gardens*

Sydney & Northern NSW

#### **Sunday 5**

Lost gardens walking tour of the Domain with Flora Deverall. 2–4pm, departing from Museum of Sydney, corner Bridge and Phillip Streets. Cost: \$20 members, \$25 guests. Bookings through Historic Houses Trust, on (02) 8239 2211 or [bookings@hht.net.au](mailto:bookings@hht.net.au)

### *From Wilderness to Pleasure Ground*

Southern Highlands

**Friday 10 to Sunday 12 (optional day Monday 13)**  
AGHS Annual National Conference to be held in Bowral, New South Wales. Information available from AGHS office.

### *Jekka McVicar*

Tasmania

#### **Saturday 11**

Lecture and demonstration on growing organic herbs, their culinary and medicinal use. The Punchbowl Centre, Launceston. Cost: \$30 members, \$35 non-members (lunch included). Bookings to Deidre Pearson (03) 6225 3084 or [depearson@bigpond.com](mailto:depearson@bigpond.com). Enquiries to Robyn Hawkins (03) 6363 6131 or [jhawkins@acenet.com.au](mailto:jhawkins@acenet.com.au)

### *Glenfield Farm garden*

Sydney & Northern NSW with HHT

#### **Sunday 12**

Floor talk on the garden at Glenfield Farm by Dave Gray. 2pm, Museum of Sydney. Cost: free with entry \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Bookings through Historic Houses Trust, on (02) 8239 2211 or [bookings@hht.net.au](mailto:bookings@hht.net.au)

### *Special garden collection viewing*

Historic Houses Trust

#### **Sunday 12**

Drawn from the collections of the Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection. 6–8pm, The Mint. Cost: to be confirmed. Bookings and enquiries to Historic Houses Trust on (02) 8239 2211 or [bookings@hht.net.au](mailto:bookings@hht.net.au)

### *Sydney's great lost garden*

Sydney & Northern NSW with HHT

#### **Sunday 26**

Sydney's great lost garden: Floor talk by Flora Deverall. 2pm, Museum of Sydney. Cost: free with entry \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Bookings through Historic Houses Trust on (02) 8239 2211 or [bookings@hht.net.au](mailto:bookings@hht.net.au)

### *Yaralla Open Day*

Sydney

#### **Sunday 26**

The Drive, Concord. For details go to [www.concordheritage.asn.au/open\\_days](http://www.concordheritage.asn.au/open_days)

### *Lost worlds*

Sydney

#### **Mondays 27 October to 17 November**

Guided spring walks through Sydney's parks and gardens. Includes Lost Gardens of Sydney exhibition, Palace Garden, Macleay Museum, University of Sydney campus walk, Elizabeth Bay House's garden, McKell Park, Darling Point, and a walk from Taronga Park Zoo to Clifton Gardens. 10am–12pm. Cost: \$110, four meetings. Bookings via WEA Sydney on (02) 9264 2781 or [www.weasydney.nsw.edu.au](http://www.weasydney.nsw.edu.au)

## NOVEMBER 2008

### *Cape Otway & Port Campbell*

#### **Saturday 1 to Tuesday 4**

Tour with Rodger & Gwen Elliot. Cost: \$490 members, \$530 non-members pp twin share, ss \$50. Contact Pamela Jellie on (03) 9836 1881 or email: [pdjellie@hotmail.com](mailto:pdjellie@hotmail.com)

### *Anzac Cottage & 'Over the Garden Gate'*

Western Australia

#### **Sunday 2**

Talk with Linda Green and guided walk with John Viska. 2pm, Anzac Cottage, 38 Kalgoorlie Street, Mount Hawthorn. Contact Caroline Grant on (08) 9384 3414 or [grantspc@iinet.net.au](mailto:grantspc@iinet.net.au)

## *Sydney's lost gardens*

Sydney & Northern NSW

### **Sunday 9**

Lost gardens walking tour of Elizabeth Bay House estate, with Scott Hill, Assistant Curator of Elizabeth Bay and Vaucluse Houses, and Stuart Read. 2-4pm. Cost: \$20 members, \$25 guests. Bookings and enquiries to Historic Houses Trust, on (02) 8239 2211 or bookings@hht.net.au

## *Interwar and Arts & Crafts gardens*

Sydney & Northern NSW with HHT

### **Sunday 9**

Floor talk by Christa Ludlow. Includes Rippon Grange. 2pm, Museum of Sydney. Cost: free with entry, \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Bookings through Historic Houses Trust on (02) 8239 2211 or bookings@hht.net.au

## *Berrima and Bargo*

Sydney & Northern NSW

### **Sunday 16**

Self-drive tour with the NSW National Trust, visiting Harper's Mansion, Berrima, and the Wirrimbirra Nature Reserve, Bargo. 11-4pm. For further details contact Stuart Read on (02) 9837 8554 or stuart1962@bigpond.com.au

## *Callan Park/Rozelle Hospital gardens*

Sydney & Northern NSW with HHT

### **Sunday 16**

Floor talk by Roslyn Burge. 2pm, Museum of Sydney. Cost: free with entry, \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Bookings through Historic Houses Trust on (02) 8239 2211 or bookings@hht.net.au

## *St Vigeans, Stirling*

South Australia

### **Sunday 16**

Garden visit to this state significant garden with a rare rhododendron collection and original 1883 layout. 2 pm, St Vigeans, Stirling. Donation: \$5 members, \$8 non-members (with afternoon tea). RSVP to Lyn Hillier (08) 8333 1329

## *Regentville's vineyard terraces, Purulia's garden*

Sydney & Northern NSW with HHT

### **Saturday 22**

Floor talk by Stuart Read 2pm, Museum of Sydney. Cost: free with entry, \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Bookings through Historic Houses Trust on (02) 8239 2211 or bookings@hht.net.au

## **DECEMBER 2008**

## *Old Colonists' Association, North Fitzroy*

Victoria

### **Wednesday 3**

Guided walk through the gardens of this historic retirement village which dates from 1869. 6pm, at the gate in Rushall Crescent (Melway 30, D12). Cost: This is a free event but BYO picnic tea. Contact Anthony Menhennitt on (03) 9744 2467 or hmenhennitt@hotmail.com

## *Christmas function*

Tasmania

### **Saturday 6**

To be celebrated at Wetmore, a Midlands garden near Ross, followed by lunch at nearby Somercotes. 11am. Cost: \$30 members, \$35 non-members. Bookings to Rex Bean (03) 6260 4418 or rex.bean@bigpond.com

## *Christmas Event at Boonah*

Queensland

### **Sunday 7**

Coochin Coochin homestead for morning tea and tour of the historic garden, then Mt Alford Lodge for lunch and tour of the water-wise garden.

10 am at Boonah Information Centre. Cost: \$45 members, \$50 non-members (meals included). Register with Gill Jorgensen (07) 3341 3933 or jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au

## *Hilltop, Stirling*

South Australia

### **Sunday 14**

Christmas drinks in the garden. Members to bring a plate of Christmas fare. 5pm, Hilltop, Stirling. Donation: \$10 members, \$15 non-members. RSVP to Lyn Hillier (08) 8333 1329

## *Christmas function*

Western Australia

### **Sunday 14**

Hosted by Ros and Max Stewart. The 20th birthday of the WA Branch will also be celebrated. Cost: \$20 members. 4pm, 103 Holmfirth Avenue, Coolbina. Contact Sue Monger on susanmonger@yahoo.com.au

## **FEBRUARY 2009**

## *St Kilda Botanic Gardens*

Victoria

### **Wednesday 11**

Guided walk through these gardens, noted for the collection of rosarian Alister Clark's roses. 6pm, at Blessington and Herbert Street corner (Melway 2 P, 10D). Invite your friends to join us for this free event. BYO picnic tea. Contact: Bronwen Merrett email: bronm@bigpond.net.au

# *Orcharding at historic Allwood*

*Bruce Draper*

Victorian branch members recently enjoyed a visit to the Eltham/Hurstbridge area, taking in Allwood, an early orcharding property in Diamond Valley.

The town of Hurstbridge, in Victoria's Diamond Valley, has retained a rather laid back rural atmosphere in the midst of expanding suburban development. One significant survivor is Allwood House. Cornelius Sharpe Haley purchased the 160 acre Allwood homestead block in 1852, having taken up the Caledonia run on the upper Diamond Creek in 1841. A timber slab homestead had been erected on the run, and the 1841 census recorded a manager, stockman, and gardener employed there. The 1852 purchase (under pre-emptive right regulations) included Haley's homestead, huts & improvements'. Having survived a holdup by Jack Williams and his gang—the 'Plenty Bushrangers—in 1842, more lasting disturbance was occasioned by the 1854 rush to the Caledonia gold diggings, which took in part of the run leasehold.

After taking up land in the Lancefield district, Haley moved to Romsey with his family in 1855. Allwood was left in the care of an overseer, Henry Facey Hurst, who had previously worked on the run whilst breaking-in horses for the Victoria Police. Hurst was later joined by his parents, Robert and Frances Hurst, who had arrived in Sydney in 1856 with other family members.

*Robert Hurst was noted as a botanist and the family's baggage included 'furniture, furnishings, plant cuttings, pot plants, [and] botanical books'*



Courtesy Hurstbridge and District Local History Group

Close to the centre of Hurstbridge is a simple Victorian weatherboard house with a remnant garden. Erected on this site in 1894, Allwood House replaced the original homestead (which served as a packing shed before its eventual demolition in 1940).



Courtesy Hurstbridge and District Local History Group

View from the Arthur's Creek road across the Allwood orchard and nursery to the Hurstbridge township, c.1924.

Robert was noted as a botanist and the Hurst's baggage included 'furniture, furnishings, plant cuttings, pot plants, [and] botanical books'. Under his supervision, the fruit garden was extended and various exotic trees planted in the park area surrounding the old Allwood homestead. These trees included golden and white poplars, propagated—so it is believed—from cuttings brought from St Helena by Major Anthony Beale, a Port Phillip pioneer with long family connections to the British East India Company.

*'We are still living with bush all around. We have no neighbours, we are twenty miles from Melbourne.'*

By 1859, the *Victoria Government Gazette* recorded that 6 acres of the 160-acre homestead block was cultivated, with an additional 9280 acres rented from the Crown. In 1863, a load of fruit was carted from Allwood to Melbourne's Western Market for sale. Soon after, Henry Hurst's sister wrote to a friend in England: 'We have a great deal of fruit. We give a great deal to the pigs. Our peach trees are as large as the apple trees at home.' The area was still isolated—Sarah noted 'We are still living with bush all around. We have no neighbours, we are twenty miles from Melbourne.'

A log bridge constructed across the Diamond Creek below the junction of Arthur's Creek soon became known as 'Hurst's Bridge'.

Henry Hurst died in 1866, shot by bushranger Robert Clusky (aka Burke) following an altercation in the Allwood kitchen. Buried overlooking the creek close to the homestead, Hurst's father planted the site with Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*), Canary Island pine (*Pinus canariensis*), and Italian stone pine (*Pinus pinea*), together with ivy and English woodbine. Hurst's father and brother Fred carried on the farm, selecting additional adjoining land. In 1868, Hurst senior finally purchased the Allwood homestead block from Cornelius Haley, and following Hurst's death in the early 1870s this was run by family members.

*Henry Hurst died in 1866, shot by bushranger Robert Clusky (aka Burke) following an altercation in the Allwood kitchen*

Henry Hurst's brother Fred ultimately inherited the property, and on their wedding in 1897 his daughter and son-in-law, Frances (Ellen)



Courtesy Hurstbridge and District Local History Group

In the early 1900s Bill Gray diversified his fruit growing activities at Allwood to include cider making. At this time he also 'created a miniature botanical style garden around the homestead', said to feature 'palms, an orange grove, sweeping lawns and mass plantings of bulbs and sweet peas'. In this photograph Ellen and Bill Gray stand in the centre of the garden, Fred Hurst sits on the verandah, while his wife Catherine stands in the garden to the left.

and William (Bill) Gray moved into the four-roomed weatherboard house which had been reconstructed near the original homestead in 1894. Fred Hurst and his wife Catherine moved into a new cottage, Mia Mia, opposite the bridge on Diamond Creek, and the original Allwood homestead became a packing shed.

At this period, orcharding was a mainstay of the district—Ellen's parents-in-law, George and Jane Gray, had also established a successful orchard at Cleir Hills (near Cottles Bridge).

George Gray and his son Owen were original members of the Arthur's Creek Fruit Growers' Association when it was formed in 1890 with Charles Draper of Charnwood, Arthur's Creek, as president (see *Australian Garden History*, 15 (5), pp.15–20). Bill Gray became proprietor of the Allwood Nursery and later purchased the Cleir Hills property following the death of his father in

1903. Using stock from Cleir Hills he established extensive fruit tree nurseries and orchards at Allwood, Cleir Hills, and Pheasant Creek, growing for local and overseas markets.

Family members continued the property until 1975, when Eltham Shire Council purchased Ferguson's Paddock (formerly part of the Allwood pre-emptive right) for a recreation reserve. The council purchased Allwood House in 1984 for use as a neighbourhood house and base for community groups.

**Bruce Draper** comes from a long line of fruit growers who have contributed to the development of Arthur's Creek and neighbouring districts for over one hundred and fifty years.



## Mission Statement

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.